

Vermont State Board of Education Monthly Report – February 2008

From the Chair

At its meeting on February 19, 2008, the State Board of Education addressed the following topics:

Board's Desired State Public Engagement

Process: Legislators - Board members met during the morning of Tuesday, February 19th, with approximately 12 representatives from businesses, community members and department of education staff to continue its public engagement process regarding the future of education in Vermont. In the afternoon, 39 representatives from statewide institutions of higher education joined the board for a similar discussion. These discussions follow the October release of *The Future of Education in Vermont*, a ***transformation document**, adopted in October 2007 by the State Board of Education.

*The transformation document has served as the genesis for conversation with statewide constituent groups on the topic. In addition, the Commissioner is holding regional conversations with students and principals. To view the transformation document, go to http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/future_of_education/future_of_education.pdf.

Summaries from October, November and December discussions can be seen at <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

Bus Idling Rules Approved -The Board voted to approve the proposed bus idling rules, in response to the passage of S.13, the first Vermont bill enacted to specifically prohibit school bus idling on school grounds. To view the approved rules, see http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet_archives/packet_08_0219/item_H-4.pdf. The rule takes effect upon approval of LCAR and filing with the Secretary of State's office.

Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs): St. Johnsbury School District - TLCs are one focus area of the current transformation discussion. St. Johnsbury School is one of the schools involved in the formative assessment and teacher learning communities training.

School Principal Marion Anastasia and the school's TLC leaders Jodie Elliot, Jeremy Ross and Beth Cobb were present for the discussion. St. Johnsbury is a large school, with 700 students and 80 staff, and is in its second year of implementing the Formative Assessment Project (FAP) which is a collaboration of the department, the Educator Testing Service (ETS), and regional Education Service Agencies (ESAs). Teachers are trained in ETS' *Keeping Learning on Track*, where teams of teachers acquire strategies that focus on student-centered learning. These teams become Teacher Learning Communities (TLC) that meet monthly to support each other in the implementation of their classroom action plans. Each TLC has a leader linked to other TLC leaders throughout the state through an on-line community facilitated by department staff. A TLC is made up primarily of teachers, can include the principal and others, but the main focus is instructional improvement. At St. Johnsbury, the TLC's span grades K-8 and have lessened the isolation of the school's teachers. TLC participants discuss teaching best practices, consider what and how students are learning, and explore deeper learning about the strategies they are using with students. This is one example of how a number of schools in Vermont are using TLCs to support learning opportunities for students.

From the Board

Brian Vachon reported that he has been appointed as member of National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Middle Level Study group, and had attended the first meeting in January.

Tom James reported on his attendance at the February 14 meeting of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE). For a list of VSBPE meeting dates, see http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_prostandards/vsbpe/vsbpe.html

From the Commissioner

Commissioner Cate reported on the regional student meetings that he has been attending around the state, noting that these students are as engaged in the conversation as were the student participants at the October 16th discussion with

the Board. Students are demonstrating differences in learning styles and strategies, as evidenced by one student who loves block scheduling and one who despises it. The Commissioner concluded that these regional meetings validate the future of education initiative.

From the Department

NECAP Reading, Math Item and

Bias/Sensitivity Review - The department of education is recruiting teachers to participate in the development of the New England Common Assessment Program's (NECAP) Assessment. Specifically, the department is seeking educators to serve as Item Reviewers or Bias/Sensitivity Reviewers. The current round of reviews is scheduled for March 18 and 19. Items proposed for the fall 2008 NECAP Reading and Math Assessments for grades 3-8 and 11 will be reviewed. More information and an application can be found at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment.html#necap. For more detailed information, contact Mary Ann Minardo at MaryAnn.Minardo@state.vt.us or (802) 828-5410.

Vermont Perkins IV Five-Year Plan -

The Vermont Department of Education is soliciting public comment on the Vermont Perkins IV Five-Year State Plan under the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 Public Law 109-270 (Perkins IV). This Act provides federal funds to Vermont to assist in improvement of career and technical education programs for students enrolled in career and technical education programs. Public comment is welcome via mail, email or in person. For detailed information see:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_teched/policy.html#comment_perkins

Annual English Language Proficiency Test: 2007-2008 ACCESS for ELLs® Assessment -

Vermont's annual English language proficiency assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs®, will be administered to all English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled in K-12 schools throughout the state during the test window from Monday, March 3, 2008 – Friday, April 18, 2008. For more information see:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_esl.html#access_info

Vermont's Approved Supplemental Service Providers - The No Child Left Behind Act

requires Title I schools that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for three or more years to offer additional services, such as tutoring outside the regular school day, to eligible students. This document lists the providers who have been approved by the Commissioner to deliver these services. The list is reviewed and updated annually. To view the 2008-09 application information, see http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/laws/nclba/supp_providers_app_09.pdf Applications for 2008-09 are due 05/01/08.

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For more information on the Vermont State Board of Education, visit:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

To view approved minutes of SBE meetings:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#approved>

To view the State Board of Education's Monthly Reports:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly_reports

